DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 194 551 TM 800 680

AUTHOR Sanders, Nicholas M.
TITLE Designing Moral Education Program Evaluations to Go Beyond Determining Program Effectiveness.
PUB DATE Nov 79
NOTE 9p.: Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Association for Moral Education (Philadelphia, PA, November, 1979).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Curriculum Development: Elementary Secondary Education: *Ethical Instruction: Evaluators: *Program Design: *Program Evaluation: School Community Relationship: Teacher Qualifications

ABSTRACT

Four issues which deserve attention by moral education program evaluators when assessing program effectiveness are discussed. The first issue involves how the program might help school people cope with a problem that they believe they have. If school people are interested in problem-related outcomes, they should be willing to facilitate the collection of information related to those outcomes. The second issue involves the placement of the moral education program within the school's total curriculum. Teachers, administrators, and sometimes parents, need to be able to determine if the program fits into social studies which deal with relations between people, into English which covers the values substance of much of the literature, or into various curricula. The evaluator should gather information from the district K-12 curriculum coordinator, who can influence the adoption and incorporation of new programs. The third issue involves what the community's reaction to a moral education program is expected to be. The evaluator should gather information on this topic before informing the community of the new program. Finally, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed in a person to present and supervise a moral education program must be decided. (RL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED194551

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

SCOPE OF INTEREST NOTICE

The ERIC Facility has assigned this document for processing to: TM | SO

In our judgement, this document is also of interest to the clearinghouses noted to the right. Indexing should reflect their special points of view.

DESIGNING MORAL EDUCATION PROGRAM EVALUATIONS TO GO BEYOND DETERMINING PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

Nicholas M. Sanders
Research for Better Schools, Inc.
444 North Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19123

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

U. Rouk

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

TM 800 680

This paper is based on a presentation made at the annual convention of the Association for Moral Education, Philadelphia, November, 1979.

DESIGNING MORAL EDUCATION PROGRAM EVALUATIONS
TO GO BEYOND DETERMINING PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

When designing an evaluation of a moral education program, an evaluator might become completely preoccupied with how to determine the program's effectiveness in achieving its objectives. This involves the important tasks of selecting the most relevant of the technically adequate measures of outcomes and arranging the conditions of the evaluation in such a way as to obtain a clear reading of the contributions of the program itself. One should not minimize the importance of such issues in evaluating an educational program.

However, moral education program evaluators should be aware that issues other than program effectiveness deserve attention also. At least since the PDK National Study Committee on Evaluation (1971) presented Educational Evaluation & Decision Making, it has been recognized that the usefulness of an evaluation depends on providing information of concern to those who make decisions about use of programs. In the author's capacity as the evaluator of a moral education program (Sanders & Chapman, 1977), several issues were regularly raised by the teachers and school administrators who had decision-making authority in the use of the program. Because these issues seem to relate to moral education programs in general, they are presented as issues to be considered in any moral education program evaluation.

The particular recurring issues that are to be discussed are: (1) How can the program help solve a problem perceived by school people?

OCT 2 8 1980

(2) How can the program fit in the school's curriculum? (3) Will the community accept the program? (4) How are school people to be prepared to use the program? In the following pages each of these issues will be discussed in more detail, with elaboration intended primarily to present how evaluations may be designed to provide information related to each.

Relation to School-Perceived Problems

First, there is the issue of how the program in question might help school people cope with a problem that they believe they have. A program will be much more readily used if it can be seen as tending to some troublesome circumstance. In my experience, violence, vandalism, verbal abuse, and a lack of manners are problems often associated with a need for moral education. Less directly, use of a moral education program may be seen as a way to correct for low scores on a statewide assessment of state goal achievement in the area of citizenship. No matter what the particular problems may be, it is possible that a similar problem will be seen as related to moral education in other schools having an interest in the program in the future.

The program evaluation may be designed to incorporate some study of this issue as it relates to the particular program in question. At the least, the evaluator should document what the school people express as expectations for what the program will do. But even more desirable is to take the expectations as indications of valued outcomes, ones which should be measured and studied along with those outcomes that are related to explicit program objectives. In fact, if school people are interested

in problem-related outcomes, they should be willing to facilitate the collection of information related to those outcomes. Thus, consideration of this issue may require less effort than one might at first anticipate.

Fit in the Curriculum

The second issue is the placement of the moral education program within the school's total curriculum. Does it fit into the social studies, because it deals with relations between people? Does it fit into English, because it relates to the values substance of much of the literature covered? Teachers and administrators (and sometimes even parents) need to be able to answer these questions satisfactorily in order to begin, and maintain, the use of the program.

Although some general answers may be supplied, it is important to determine more specific answers for the specific program. Programs differ in their primary themes, in the ease of relation to other subject matter, and in time and setting requirements. Thus, one general answer or even several possible alternatives will not be as helpful to the potential users as a description of how the program had been fitted into various curricula.

The evaluator may help to develop such a description by attending to these topics: (1) Why was particular subject matter considered as an appropriate context? (2) What were the determining factors in the decision to place the program in the particular subject matter context that was chosen? (3) Within that context what was eliminated or abbreviated in order to make room for the program? (4) Within that context how were aspects of the program explicitly related to aspects of the context?

Answers to these questions often arise in spontaneous comments by the teachers and administrators who are involved in the evaluation study. But if such comments cannot be noted from discussions without inquiring directly, then the evaluator should ask the appropriate school people; the questioning may even lead the teacher or administrator to prepare to answer this question for colleagues who may also expect an answer. Finally, if possible, the evaluator should gather information on this issue from the person who has overall responsibility for the K-12 curriculum at the district level, because the person in this position generally has much influence over the adoption and incorporation of new programs.

Community Acceptance

The third issue is: "What can we expect the community's reaction to this program to be?" Moral education is a potential "hot potato," and school people quite often raise this issue. It's helpful to have a tested response -- one that's tailored to the program.

Program developers are well-advised to develop also an accurate description of the procedures or materials in question and a rationale for their presence in the school. The purpose of this information is to define clearly what is being offered, in order to avoid community rejection based on misunderstanding. One might go a step further to provide such information for the community -- especially the parents of the students who will be involved -- before the program is started. That would avoid the image of trying to sneak the program in, a concern voiced by some community members in the author's experience.

Even if there is no prior community notification of the new program, the evaluator may gather useful information on this topic. The evaluator could ask to be informed by the teachers or school administrators about any contacts they have with parents or other community members concerning the program. Records of the particular concerns voiced by community members, the response by the school people, and the outcomes, could be valuable in the development of community-oriented materials about the program.

If there are community-oriented materials available with the program, then the evaluator may set about evaluating the effectiveness of those materials. Do the topics discussed match the concerns that are voiced? Do the community people who receive the materials indicate an understanding of the program? Are other materials or procedures for informing the community needed? Do community people raise concerns about the program (e.g., that it leads to atheism) about which empirical data might be sought and presented as part of the information about the program?

Staff Preparation

Finally, there is the issue of what knowledge, skills, and attitudes are needed in a person to present and supervise the moral education program. Taking moral education seriously and realizing that most preservice teacher training institutions do very little to prepare teachers for moral education responsibilities, both school people and community members can be expected to have an interest in an answer to this question.

It is important to note that in some cases the training and advising of staff is practically 100% of what the program provides. At the other extreme, there may be no formal staff preparation, independent of the staff's study of the instructional materials and a teacher's manual. An example of the latter is one in which there is a capability for complete audio-taped delivery of instruction.

Whether or not there is formal staff preparation, the evaluator can use the opportunity of an evaluation study to gather information on adequacy of staff preparation. In order to study the adequacy of staff preparation, the evaluator should focus on whether the program is delivered to students in the way intended by the program developers and/or staff trainers. (Such a focus allows not only for a study of the adequacy of staff preparation, but also explores one possible reason that an ineffective program did not achieve the desired student outcomes.)

The evaluator can gather such information in several ways. Direct observation of the staff members as they present the program to students is the most adequate. However, because of the costliness of direct observation, it could be supplemented with interviews of the staff to determine what they did during presentations when the evaluator was not making direct observation. For additional guidance, the evaluator should become aware of the work of Gene Hall and his colleagues (e.g., Hall & Loucks, 1977).

Summary

The intent in reviewing these four issues of dissemination is to encourage study related to them from very early in the efforts to evaluate a moral education program. Suggestions were made as to how to incorporate the study of these issues as the evaluator is taking up the more standard focus on the program's effectiveness. In most cases, this broader evaluation will not require much additional time or effort, and in the long run, any added time and effort will be considered worthwhile in terms of the usefulness of the information provided.

References

Hall, G. E. and Loucks, S. F. "A developmental model for determining whether the treatment is actually implemented." American Educational Research Journal, 1977, 14, pp. 263-276.

PDK National Study Committee on Evaluation. Educational Evaluation & Decision Making. Bloomington, Indiana: Peacock, 1971.

Sanders, N. M., and Chapman, M. L. Skills for Ethical Action: A Report on the Program Evaluation, 1976-77. Philadelphia: Research for Better Schools, Inc., 1977.